Shooting of Film 'Water' at Varanasi

364. SHRI J. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported uncivilized acts of vandalism unleashed by the Sangh Parivar and the newly formed Kashi Sanskriti Raksha Sangharsh Samithi activists against the internationally acclaimed film Director, Deepa Mehta and her team and destroying the sets of film "Water" at Varanasi;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the sanction for the shooting of the film was obtained from his Ministry in advance; and

(d) if so, why such attack on the shooting set in and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN JAITLEY): (a), (b) and (d) On 31st January, 2000 Government of Uttar Pradesh conveyed that there were protests by several organizations and persons in Varanasi on the 30th January, about the content of the script of the film "Water". The State Government informed that on the 30th January, 2000, a group of persons demonstrated on the location of the film during which some damage was caused to the sets prepared for shooting. There was no loss of life. In view of the protests, the State Govt, suggested re-examination of the script by the Govt, of India. A revised version of the script containing dialogues in Hindi with some deletions/modifications submitted by Ms. Deepa Mehta was approved by the Ministry on 2.2.2000. Shooting was done thereafter on 5th February, but due to a law and order problem created by the continued protests, demonstrations and an attempted suicide, the District Administration ordered stoppage of shooting for 15 days under Section 144 Cr. PC by their order of 7th February, 2000.

(c) Yes Sir. The proposal of Canadian company, M/s. Flagship International Ltd. had been cleared for shooting of the film "Water" in India by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on 6.1.2000 according to procedure laid down in the Visa Manual brought out by the Ministry of External Affairs. Shooting of the film on location, however, is subject to permission of the respective controlling authorities.